

Act.

COUNTRY GIRL.

Scene.



D. Wille ad viv. pinx.

Beomeley, sc.

MR JORDAN & PEGGY.

At the young man's room at the old house.

London, Printed by J. Bell, at the Old Library, Strand, 1814.



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THE
COUNTRY GIRL.

A
COMEDY.

ALTERED FROM WYCHERLY,
BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ.

ADAPTED FOR
THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION

AS PERFORMED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL DRURY-LANE.

REGULATED FROM THE PROMPT-BOOKS,
By Permission of the Managers.

"The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation."

LONDON:

*Printed for the Proprietors, under the Direction of JOHN BELL,
British Library, STRAND,
Bookseller to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.*

M DCC XCI.

COUNTY GIRL

WICKHAMPTON WICKHAMPTON



LONDON

Printed by the Royal Museum, London

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WILLIAM WYCHERLY.

THIS Comic Poet, was born about the year 1640.—Like several of the Muse's ornaments, he was intended for the profession of the law—but the gay and seducing amusements of the town allured him from the severities of that study, and finding the production of Comedy the shortest step into favour and fashion, he commenced a Writer for the Stage.

The reign of the Second Charles was favourable thus far to literature, that the Court patronized what was believed the brightest talent among the people.—WYCHERLY came in for a full share of this distinction; and what has seldom happened from crowned heads, CHARLES in person condescended to visit the poet in a severe indisposition, under which he was reduced to the last extremity. His Majesty laid his commands upon him to go into the South of France, and liberally ordered him 500*l.* to defray his expences.—At his return, the Monarch told him that his opinion of him was so high, that his Son should be consigned to his tuition, and that as his governor he should receive an appointment of 1500*l.* per ann.

At Tunbridge, however, chance threw him into the way of the Countess of DROGHEDA, and shortly after he married her.—This contumacy to the disposition of the king, and the added ingratitude of making not the smallest communication to his Majesty of his intention, lost him deservedly the royal favour.—The Countess embittered his life by a jealousy, which never

suffered him a minute from her sight.—She indeed relieved him shortly from this torment by her death—but his title to her fortune was disputed. He became embarrassed and indigent, and was thrown into prison until JAMES the Second, luckily seeing the Plain Dealer, gave orders that his debts should be discharged, and himself allowed a pension of 200*l.* per annum. WYCHERLY struggled with the dishonour of disclosing the whole of his debts, and thus rendered the king's bounty in some measure ineffectual.—His father's death did not much relieve him—he found his inheritance here too involved.—Eleven days before he died he married again, for the express purpose of paying his creditors with his wife's fortune of 1500*l.*—He was summoned finally from all his cares on the 1st of January, 1715.

THE
COUNTRY GIRL.

THIS Comedy is an alteration from the Country Wife of WYCHERLY. The usual taint of the time in which he wrote had so infected the whole mass, that Mr. GARRICK found himself reduced to the necessity of lopping off a limb (HORNER) to save the whole from putrefaction.

As it is here given, there is a considerable degree of sprightly dialogue, keen remark, and facility of invention.—If we except CONGREVE, WYCHERLY is equal to any of his followers; with them he has one common defect, that they are not sufficiently scrupulous as to tendency—and the spoiler of domestic peace unpunished riots in the perversion of legitimate principles, and the injury offered to the wise and the worthy.—A foible is without distinction punished as a vice, and the profligacy of the pleasing debauchee rewarded as a virtue.

It would be unpardonable if we were to close this article without observing, that the excellence of Mrs. JORDAN in the Country Girl is so powerful—every girlish trick so minutely and naturally delineated, that we pronounce the performance to be HER *chef d'œuvre*, and assuredly the boast of modern acting.

Dramatis Personae.

DRURY - LANE.

Men.

MOODY,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. King.
HARCOURT,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Palmer.
SPARKISH,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Dodd.
BELVILLE,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Whitfield.
Footman,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Spencer.
Countryman,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Jones.
Servant,	-	-	-	-	-	Mr. Alfred.

Women.

Miss PEGGY,	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Jordan.
ALITHEA,	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Ward.
LUCY,	-	-	-	-	-	Mrs. Williams.

SCENE, *London.*



THE
COUNTRY GIRL.

ACT I. SCENE I.

HARCOURT's Lodgings. HARCOURT and BELVILLE discovered
sitting.

Harcourt.

HA, ha, ha! and so you are in love, nephew, not reasonably and gallantly, as a young gentleman ought, but sighingly, miserably so—not content to be ankle-deep, you have sous'd over head and ears—ha, Dick?

Belv. I am pretty much in that condition, indeed, uncle.
[Sighs.]

Harc. Nay, never blush at it—when I was of your age I was asham'd too—but three years at college, and half a one at Paris, methinks should have cured you of that unfashionable weakness—modesty.

Belv. Could I have releas'd myself from that, I had, perhaps, been at this instant happy in the possession of what I must despair now ever to obtain—Heigho!

Harc. Ha, ha, ha! very foolish indeed.

Belv. Don't laugh at me, uncle; I am foolish, I know! but, like other fools, I deserve to be pitied.

Harc. Pr'ythee, don't talk of pity; how can I help you;—for this country girl of yours is certainly married.

Belv. No, no—I won't believe it: she is not married, nor she shan't, if I can help it.

Harc. Well said, modesty—with such a spirit you can help yourself, Dick, without my assistance. 21

Belv. But you must encourage, and advise me too, or I shall never make any thing of it.

Harc. Provided the girl is not married; for I never, never encourage young men to covet their neighbours' wives.

Belv. My heart assures me, that she is not married.

Harc. O to be sure, your heart is much to be relied upon—but to convince you that I have a fellow-feeling of your distress, and that I am as nearly allied to you in misfortunes as in relationship—you must know——

Belv. What, uncle? you alarm me!

Harc. That I am in love too.

Belv. Indeed!

Harc. Miserably in love.

Belv. That's charming.

Harc. And my mistress is just going to be married to another.

Belv. Better and better.

Harc. I knew my fellow-sufferings would please you; but now prepare for the wonderful wonder-of-wonders! 40

Belv. Well! ——

Harc. My mistress is in the same house with yours.

Belv. What, are you in love with Peggy too?

[*Rising from his chair.*]

Harc. Well said, jealousy.—No, no, set your heart at rest.—Your Peggy is too young, and too simple for me.—I must have one a little more knowing, a little better bred, just old enough to see the difference between me and a coxcomb, spirit enough to break from a brother's engagements, and choose for herself.

Belv. You don't mean Alithea, who is to be married to Mr. Sparkish? 51

Harc. Can't I be in love with a lady that is going to be married to another, as well as you, sir?

Belv. But Sparkish is your friend?

Harc. Pr'ythee don't call him my friend; he can be nobody's friend, not even his own—He would thrust himself into my acquaintance, would introduce me to his mistress, tho' I have told him again and again that I was in love with her, which, instead of ridding me of him, has made him only ten times more troublesome—and me really in love—He should suffer for his self-sufficiency.

Belv. 'Tis a conceited puppy!—And what success with the lady?

Harc. No great hopes—and yet, if I could defer the marriage a few days, I should not despair;—her honour, I am confident, is her only attachment to my rival—she can't like Sparkish, and if I can work upon his credulity, a credulity which even popery would be ashamed of, I may yet have the chance of throwing sixes upon the dice to save me.

Belv. Nothing can save me. 70

Harc. No, not if you whine and sigh, when you should be exerting every thing that is man about you. I have sent Sparkish, who is admitted at all hours in the house, to know how the land lies for you, and if she is not married already.

Belv. How cruel you are—you raise me up with one hand, and then knock me down with the other.

Harc. Well, well, she shan't be married. [*Knocking at the door.*] This is Sparkish, I suppose: don't drop the least hint of your passion to him; if you do, you may as well advertise it in the public papers.

Belv. I'll be careful.

Enter Servant.

Serv. An odd sort of a person, from the country I believe, who calls himself Moody, wants to see you, sir ; but as I did not know him, I said you were not at home, but would return directly ; *and so will I too*, said he, very short and surly ! and away he went, mumbling to himself.

Harc. Very well, Will—I'll see him when he comes. [*Exit servant.*] Moody call to see me !—He has something more in his head than making me a visit—'tis to complain of you, I suppose.

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Belv. How can he know me ?

Harc. We must suppose the worst, and be prepared for him—tell me all you know of this ward of his, this Peggy—Peggy what's her name ?

Belv. Thrift, Thrift, uncle.

Harc. Ay, ay, sir Thomas Thrift's daughter, of Hampshire, and left very young under the guardianship of my old acquaintance and companion, Jack Moody.

Belv. Your companion ! he's old enough to be your father.

Harc. Thank you, nephew ; he has greatly the advantage of me in years, as well as wisdom. When I first launched from the university, into this ocean of London, he was the greatest rake in it ; I knew him well, for near two years, but all of a sudden he took a freak (a very prudent one) of retiring wholly into the country.

Belv. There he gain'd such an ascendancy over the odd disposition of his neighbour, sir Thomas, that he left him sole guardian to his daughter, who forfeits half her fortune, if she does not marry with his consent—there's the devil, uncle.

Harc. And are you so young, so foolish, and so much in love, that you would take her with half her value? ha, nephew?

Belv. I'll take her with any thing—with nothing.

Harc. What! such an unaccomplish'd, awkward, silly creature; he has scarce taught her to write; she has seen nobody to converse with, but the country people about 'em; so she can do nothing but dangle her arms, look gawky, turn her toes in, and talk broad Hampshire. 120

Belv. Don't abuse her sweet simplicity—had you but heard her talk, as I have done, from the garden-wall in the country, by moon-light—

Harc. Romeo and Juliet, I protest, ha, ha, ha! *Arise fair sun, and kill the envious*—ha, ha, ha! How often have you seen this fair Capulet?

Belv. I saw her three times in the country, and spoke to her twice; I have leapt an orchard-wall, like Romeo, to come at her, play'd the balcony-scene, from an old summer-house in the garden; and if I lose her, I will find out an apothecary, and play the tomb-scene too.

Harc. Well said, Dick!—this spirit must produce something—but has the old dragon ever caught you sighing at her?

Belv. Never in the country; he saw me yesterday kissing my hand to her, from the new-tavern window that looks upon the back of his house, and immediately drove her from it, and fasten'd up the window-shutters.

[*Sparkish without.*

Spark. Very well, Will, I'll go up to 'em. 139

Harc. I hear Sparkish coming up—take care of what I told you—not a word of Peggy;—hear his intelligence, and make use of it, without seeming to mind it.

Belv. Mum, mum, uncle.

Enter SPARKISH.

Spark. O, my dear Harcourt, I shall die with laughing—I have such news for thee—ha, ha, ha!—What, your nephew too, and a little dumpish, or so—you have been giving him a lecture upon œconomy—I suppose.—You, who never had any, can best describe the evils that arise from the want of it.—I never mind my own affairs, not I—“The gods take care of Cato.”—I hear, Mr. Belville, you have got a pretty snug house, with a bow-window that looks into the Park, and a back-door that goes out into it.—Very convenient and well-imagin’d—no young, handsome fellow should be without one—you may be always ready there, like a spider in his web, to seize upon stray’d women of quality.

Harc. As you used to do—you vain fellow you; pr’ythee, don’t teach my nephew your abandoned tricks—he is a modest young man, and you must not spoil him.—

Spark. May be so;—but his modesty has done some mischief at our house—my surly, jealous brother-in-law saw that modest young gentleman casting a wishful eye at his forbidden fruit, from the new-tavern window.

Belv. You mistake the person, Mr. Sparkish—I don’t know what young lady you mean.

Harc. Explain yourself, Sparkish; you must mistake—Dick has never seen the girl.

Spark. I don’t say he has; I only tell you what Moody says. Besides, he went to the tavern himself, and enquired of the waiter, who dined in the back room, No. 4, and they told him it was Mr. Belville, your nephew; that’s all I know of the matter, or desire to know of it, faith.

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Harc. He kiss’d his hand, indeed, to your lady, Alithea, and is more in love with her than you are, and very near as much as I am; so look about you, such a youth may be dangerous.

Spark. The more danger the more honour : I defy you both ; win her and wear her if you can—*Dolus an virtus* in love as well as in war—though you must be expeditious, faith ; for I believe, if I don't change my mind, I shall marry her to-morrow, or the day after. Have you no honest clergyman, Harcourt, no fellow-collegian to recommend to me to do the business ?

Harc. Nothing ever, sure, was so lucky. [*Aside.*] Why, faith, I have, Sparkish ; my brother, a twin-brother, Ned Harcourt, will be in town to-day, and proud to attend your commands. I am a very generous rival, you see, to lend you my brother to marry the woman I love !

Spark. And so am I too, to let your brother come so near us—but Ned shall be the man ; poor Alithea grows impatient—I can't put off the evil day any longer—I fancy the brute, her brother, has a mind to marry his country idiot at the same time.

Belv. How, country idiot, sir !

Harc. Taisez vous, bête. [*Aside to Belv.*] I thought he had been married already.

Spark. No, no, he's not married, that's the joke of it.

Belv. No, no, he is not married.

Harc. Hold your tongue—

[*Elbowing Belville.*]

Spark. Not he—I have the finest story to tell you—by the bye, he intends calling upon you, for he ask'd me where you lived, to complain of *modesty* there.—He pick'd up an old raking acquaintance of his, as we came along together—Will. Frankly, who saw him with his girl, sculking and muffled up, at the play last night : he plagu'd him much about matrimony, and his being ashamed to shew himself ; swore he was in love with his wife, and intended to cuckold him. Do you ? cry'd Mòody, folding his arms, and scowling with his eyes thus—*You must have more wit than you used to have.*—

Beside, if you have as much as you think you have, I shall be out of your reach, and this profligate metropolis, in less than a week. Moody would fain have got rid of him, but the other held him by the sleeve, so I left 'em; rejoiced most luxuriously to see the poor devil tormented.

Belv. I thought you said, just now, that he was *not* married: is not that a contradiction, sir?

[*Harcourt still makes signs to Belville.*]

Spark. Why, it is a kind of one—but considering your modesty, and your ignorance of the young lady, you are pretty tolerably inquisitive, methinks; ha, Harcourt! ha, ha, ha!

Harc. Pooh, pooh! don't talk to that boy, tell me all you know.

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Spark. You must know, my booby of a brother-in-law hath brought up this ward of his (a good fortune let me tell you) as he coops up and fattens his chickens, for his own eating: he is plaguy jealous of her, and was very sorrow that he could not marry her in the country, without coming up to town; which he could not do on account of some writings or other; so what does my gentleman? he persuades the poor silly girl, by breaking a six-pence, or some nonsense or another, that they are to all intents married in Heaven; but that the laws require the signing of articles, and the church-service to complete their union—so he has made her call him husband, and Bud, which she constantly does; and he calls her wife, and gives out she is married, that she may not look after younger fellows, nor younger fellows after her, egad; ha, ha, ha! and all won't do.

Belv. Thank you, sir—What heavenly news, uncle. [*Aside.*]

Harc. What an idiot you are, nephew! And so then you make but one trouble of it, and are both to be tack'd together the same day?

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Spark. No, no, he can't be married this week ; he damns the lawyers for keeping him in town :—besides, I am out of favour ; and he is continually snarling at me, and abusing me, for not being jealous. [*Knocking at the door.*] There he is—I must not be seen with you, for he'll suspect something ; I'll go with your nephew to his house, and we'll wait for you, and make a visit to my wife that is to be, and, perhaps, we shall shew young modesty here a sight of Peggy too.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Sir, here's the strange odd sort of a gentleman come again, and I have shewn him into the fore-parlour. 250

Spark. That must be Moody ! Well said, Will ; an odd sort of a strange gentleman indeed ; we'll step into the next room till he comes into this, and then you may have him all to yourself—much good may do you. [*Sparkish going, returns.*] Remember that he is married, or he'll suspect me of betraying him. [*Exeunt Sparkish and Belville.*]

Harc. Shew him up, Will. [*Exit Serv.*] Now must I prepare myself to see a very strange, though a very natural metamorphosis—a once high-spirited, handsome, well-dress'd, raking prodigal of the town, sunk into a surly, suspicious, æconomical country sloven.—

Enter Moody.

Moody. Mr. Harcourt, your humble servant—have you forgot me ?

Harc. What, my old friend Jack Moody ! By thy long absence from town, the grumness of thy countenance, and the slovenliness of thy habit, I should give thee joy—you are certainly married.

Moody. My long stay in the country will excuse my dress, and I have a suit at law that brings me up to town, and puts

me out of humour—besides, I must give Sparkish ten thousand pounds to-morrow to take my sister off my hands.

Harc. Your sister is very much obliged to you—being so much older than her, you have taken upon you the authority of a father, and have engaged her to a coxcomb.

Moody. I have, and to oblige her—nothing but coxcombs or debauchees are the favourites now-a-days, and a coxcomb is rather the more innocent animal of the two.

Harc. She has sense and taste, and can't like him; so you must answer for the consequences. 279

Moody. When she is out of my hands, her husband must look to consequences. He's a fashionable fool, and will cut his horns kindly.

Harc. And what is to secure your worship from consequences?—I did not expect marriage from such a rake—one that knew the town so well; fye, fye, Jack.

Moody. I'll tell you my security—I have married no London wife.

Harc. That's all one—that grave circumspection in marrying a country wife, is like refusing a deceitful, pamper'd, Smithfield jade, to go and be cheated by a friend in the country.

Moody. I wish the devil had both him and his simile. [*Aside.*]

Harc. Well, never grumble about it, what's done can't be undone; is your wife handsome and young?

Moody. She has little beauty but her youth, nothing to brag of but her health, and no attraction but her modesty—wholesome, homely, and housewifely—that's all.

Harc. You talk as like a grazier as you look, Jack—why did you not bring her to town before, to be taught something? 300

Moody. Which something I might repent as long as I live—

Harc. But, pr'ythee, why would'st thou marry her, if she be ugly, ill-bred, and silly? She must be rich then.

Moody. As rich as if she had the wealth of the Mogul—she'll not ruin her husband, like a London baggage, with a million of vices she never heard of—then, because she's ugly, she's the likelier to be my own; and being ill-bred, she'll hate conversation; and since silly and innocent, will not know the difference between me and you; that is, between a man of thirty, and one of forty. 311

Harc. Fifty, to my knowledge—[*Moody turns off, and grumbles.*]—But see how you and I differ, Jack—wit to me is more necessary than beauty: I think no young woman ugly that has it; and no handsome woman agreeable without it.

Moody. 'Tis my maxim—He's a fool that marries; but he's a greater that does not marry a fool.—I know the town, Mr. Harcourt; and my wife shall be virtuous in spite of you, or your nephew.

Harc. My nephew!—poor sheepish lad—he runs away from every woman he sees—he saw your sister Alithea at the opera, and was much smitten with her—He always toasts her—and hates the very name of Sparkish. I'll bring him to your house—and you shall see what a formidable Tarquin he is. 325

Moody. I have no curiosity, so give yourself no trouble. You have heard of a wolf in sheep's cloathing, and I have seen your innocent nephew kissing his hands at my windows.

Harc. At your sister, I suppose; not at her unless he was tipsy. How can you, Jack, be so outrageously suspicious? Sparkish has promised to introduce him to his mistress.

Moody. Sparkish is a fool, and may be, what I'll take care not to be. I confess my visit to you, Mr. Harcourt, was partly for old acquaintance sake, but chiefly to desire your nephew to confine his gallantries to the tavern, and not send

'em in looks, signs, or tokens, on the other side of the way. I keep no brothel—so pray tell your nephew. [Going.

Harc. Nay, pr'ythee, Jack, leave me in better humour—Well, I'll tell him, ha, ha, ha! poor Dick, how he'll stare. This will give him a reputation, and the girls won't laugh at him any longer. Shall we dine together at the tavern, and send for my nephew to chide him for his gallantry? Ha, ha, ha! we shall have fine sport. 343

Moody. I am not to be laugh'd out of my senses, Mr. Harcourt; I was once a modest, meek, young gentleman myself, and I never have been half so mischievous before or since, as I was in that state of innocence. And so, old friend, make no ceremony with me—I have much business, and you have much pleasure, and therefore, as I hate forms, I will excuse your returning my visit: or sending your nephew to satisfy me of his modesty—and so your servant.

[Exit.

Harc. Ha, ha, ha! poor Jack! what a life of suspicion does he lead! I pity the poor fellow, tho' he ought, and will suffer, for his folly.—Folly!—'tis treason, murder, sacrilege! When persons of a certain age will indulge their false, ungenerous appetites, at the expence of a young creature's happiness, dame Nature will revenge herself upon them, for thwarting her most heavenly will and pleasure.

[Exit.

ACT II. SCENE I.

A Chamber in MOODY's House. Enter Miss PEGGY and ALITHEA.

Peggy.

PRAY, sister, where are the best fields and woods to walk in, in London?

Alib. A pretty question ! Why, sister, Vauxhall, Ranelagh, and St. James's Park, are the most frequented.

Peg. Pray, sister, tell me why my Bud looks so grum here in town, and keeps me up close, and will not let me go a walking, nor let me wear my best gown yesterday.

Alib. O, he's jealous, sister.

Peg. Jealous ! what's that ?

Alib. He's afraid you should love another man. 10

Peg. How should he be afraid of my loving another man, when he will not let me see any but himself ?

Alib. Did he not carry you yesterday to a play ?

Peg. Ay ; but we sat amongst ugly people : he would not let me come near the gentry, who sat under us, so that I could not see 'em. He told me none but naughty women sat there—but I would have ventured for all that.

Alib. But how did you like the play ?

Peg. Indeed I was weary of the play ; but I liked hugely the actors ; they are the goodliest, properest men, sister.

Alib. O, but you must not like the actors, sister.

Peg. Ay, how should I help it sister ! Pray, sister, when my guardian comes in, will you ask leave for me to go a walking ?

Alib. A walking, ha, ha, ha ! Lord, a country gentlewoman's pleasure is the drudgery of a footpost ; and she requires as much airing as her husband's horses. [*Aside.*] But here comes my brother, I'll ask him, tho' I'm sure he'll not grant it. 30

Enter MOODY.

Peg. O my dear, dear Bud, welcome home ; why dost thou look so fropish ? Who has nanger'd thee ?

Moody. You're a fool. [*Peggy goes aside, and cries.*]

Alib. Faith, and so she is, for crying for no fault, poor tender creature !

Moody. What, you would have her as impudent as yourself, as arrant a gillflirt, a gadder, a magpie, and, to say all, a mere notorious town woman !

Alib. Brother, you are my only censurer ; and the honour of your family will sooner suffer in your wife that is to be, than in me, tho' I take the innocent liberty of the town !

Moody. Hark you, mistress, do not talk so before my wife: the innocent liberty of the town !

Alib. Pray, what ill people frequent my lodgings ? I keep no company with any woman of scandalous reputation.

Moody. No, you keep the men of scandalous reputation company.

Alib. Would you not have me civil, answer 'em at public places, walk with 'em when they join me in the Park, Ranelagh, or Vauxhall ?

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Moody. Hold, hold ; do not teach my wife where the men are to be found : I believe she's the worse for your town documents already. I bid you keep her in ignorance, as I do.

Peg. Indeed, be not angry with her, Bud, she will tell me nothing of the town, tho' I ask her a thousand times a day.

Moody. Then you are very inquisitive to know, I find ?

Peg. Not I indeed, dear ; I hate London : our play-house in the country is worth a thousand of't ; would I were there again !

Moody. So you shall, I warrant. But were you not talking of plays and players when I came in ? you are her encourager in such discourses.

Peg. No, indeed, dear ; she chid me just now for liking the player-men.

Moody. Nay, if she is so innocent as to own me her liking them, there is no hurt in't. [*Aside.*] Come, my poor rogue, but thou likest none better than me ?

Peg. Yes, indeed, but I do; the player-men are finer folks.

Moody. But you love none better than me? 70

Peg. You are my own dear Bud, and I know you; I hate strangers.

Moody. Ay, my dear, you must love me only; and not be like the naughty town-women, who only hate their husbands, and love every man else; love plays, visits, fine coaches, fine clothes, fiddles, balls, treats, and so lead a wicked town-life.

Peg. Nay, if to enjoy all these things be a town-life, London is not so bad a place, dear.

Moody. How! if you love me, you must hate London.

Peg. But, Bud, do the town women love the player-men too?

Moody. Ay, I warrant you.

Peg. Ay, I warrant you.

Moody. Why, you do not, I hope?

Peg. No, no, Bub; but why have we no player-men in the country?

Moody. Ha! Mrs. Minx, ask me no more to go to a play.

Peg. Nay, why, love? I did not care for going: but when you forbid me, you make me as 'twere desire it. 91

Alith. So 'twill be in other things, I warrant. [Aside.

Peg. Pray, let me go to a play, dear?

Moody. Hold your peace, I won't.

Peg. Why, love?

Moody. Why, I'll tell you.

Alith. Nay, if he tell her, she'll give him more cause to forbid her that place. [Aside.

Peg. Pray, why, dear?

Moody. First, you like the actors; and the gallants may like you.

Peg. What, a homely country girl? No, Bud, nobody will like me.

Moody. I tell you yes, they may.

Peg. No, no, you jest—I won't believe you: I will go.

Moody. I tell you then, that one of the most raking fellows in town, who saw you there, told me he was in love with you.

Peg. Indeed! who, who, pray, who was't?

Moody. I've gone too far, and slipt before I was aware. How overjoy'd she is! [*Aside.*

Peg. Was it any Hampshire gallant, any of our neighbours? — Promise you I am beholden to him.

Moody. I promise you, you lie; for he would but ruin you, as he has done hundreds.

Peg. Ay, but if he loves me, why should he ruin me? answer me to that. Methinks he should not; I would do him no harm.

Alitb. Ha, ha, ha!

Moody. 'Tis very well; but I'll keep him from doing you any harm, or me either. But here comes company, get you in, get you in. 121

Peg. But pray husband, is he a pretty gentleman that loves me?

Moody. In, baggage, in. [*Thrusts her in, and shuts the door.*]

Enter SPARKISH, HARCOURT, and BELVILLE.

Moody. What, all the libertines of the town brought to my lodging, by this easy coxcomb! 'Sdeath, I'll not suffer it.

Spark. Here, Belville, do you approve my choice? Dear little rogue, I told you, I'd bring you acquainted with all my friends, the wits.

Moody. Ay, they shall know her as well as you yourself will, I warrant you.

Spark. This is one of those, my pretty rogue, that are to dance at your wedding to-morrow. And one you must make

welcome, for he's modest. [*Belville salutes Alithea.*] Harcourt makes himself welcome, and has not the same foible, though of the same family.

Harc. You are too obliging, Sparkish.

Moody. And so he is indeed—the fop's horns will as naturally sprout upon his brows, as mushrooms upon dung-hills. 140

Harc. This, Mr. Moody, is my nephew you mentioned to me; I would bring him with me, for a sight of him will be sufficient, without poppy or mandragora, to restore you to your rest.

Belv. I am sorry, sir, that any mistake or imprudence of mine should have given you any uneasiness; it was not so intended, I assure you, sir.

Moody. It may be so, sir, but not the less criminal for that—My wife, sir, must not be smirk'd and nodded at from tavern windows: I am am a good shot, young gentlemen, and don't suffer magpies to come near my cherries.

Belv. Was it your wife, sir?

Moody. What's that to you, sir—suppose it was my grandmother?

Belv. I would not dare to offend her—permit me to say a word in private to you. [*Exeunt Moody and Belville.*]

Spark. Now old Surly is gone, tell me, Harcourt, if thou likest her as well as ever—My dear, don't look down, I should hate to have a wife of mine out of countenance at any thing. 160

Alithea. For shame, Mr. Sparkish.

Spark. 'Tell me, I say, Harcourt, how dost like her? thou hast star'd upon her enough to resolve me.

Harc. So infinitely well, that I could wish I had a mistress too, that might differ from her in nothing but her love and engagement to you.

Alith. Sir, Mr. Sparkish has often told me, that his acquaintance were all wits and railers, and now I find it.

Spark. No, by the universe, madam, he does not rally now; you may believe him; I do assure you he is the honestest, worthiest, true-hearted gentleman; a man of such perfect honour, he would say nothing to a lady he does not mean.

Harc. Sir, you are so beyond expectation obliging, that—

Spark. Nay, egad, I am sure you do admire her extremely, I see it in your eyes—He does admire you, madam, he has told me a thousand and a thousand times—Have you not Harcourt? You do admire her, by the world, you do—don't you?

Harc. Yes above the world, or the most glorious part of it, her whole sex; and 'till now, I never thought I should have envied you or any man about to marry: but you have the best excuse to marry I ever knew. 182

Alith. Nay, now, sir, I am satisfied you are of the society of the wits and railers, since you cannot spare your friend, even when he is most civil to you; but the surest sign is, you are an enemy to marriage, the common butt of every railer.

Harc. Truly, madam, I was never an enemy to marriage till now, because marriage was never an enemy to me before.

Alith. But why, sir, is marriage an enemy to you now? because it robs you of your friend here? for you look upon a friend married, as one gone into a monastery, that is dead to the world.

Harc. 'Tis indeed, because you marry him: I see, madam, you can guess my meaning: I do confess heartily and openly, I wish it were in my power to break the match; by Heavens I would.

Spark. Poor Frank!

Alith. Would you be so unkind to me?

Harc. No, no, 'tis not because I would be unkind to you.

Spark. Poor Frank; no, egad, 'tis only his kindness to me.

Alith. Great kindness to you indeed!—Insensible! Let a man make love to his mistress to his face. [Aside.

Spark. Come, dear Frank, for all my wife there, that shall be, thou shalt enjoy me sometimes, dear rogue: by my honour, we men of wit condole for our diseased brother in marriage, as much as for one dead in earnest: I think that was prettily said of me, ha, Harcourt?—But come, Frank, be not melancholy for me.

Harc. No, I assure you, I am not melancholy for you.

Spark. Pr'ythee, Frank, dost think my wife, that shall be, there, a fine person? 211

Harc. I could gaze upon her, till I became as blind as you are.

Spark. How, as I am? how?

Harc. Because you are a lover; and true lovers are blind.

Spark. True, true: but by the world she has wit too, as well as beauty: go, go with her into a corner, and try if she has wit; talk to her any thing, she's bashful before me.

[Harcourt courts Alitheia aside.

Enter MOODY.

Moody. How, sir, if you are not concerned for the honour of a wife, I am for that of a sister;—be a pander to your own wife, bring men to her, let 'em make love before your face, thrust 'em into a corner together, then leave 'em in private! is this your town wit and conduct?

Spark. Ha, ha, ha! a silly wise rogue would make one laugh more than a stark fool: ha, ha, ha! I shall burst.—Nay, you shall not disturb 'em; I'll vex thee, by the world. What have you done with Belville? 227

[Struggles with Moody, to keep him from Harcourt and Alitheia.]

Moody. Shewn him the way out of my house, as you should to that gentleman.

Spark. Nay, but pr'ythee—let me reason with thee. 230

[*Talks aside with Moody.*]

Alith. The writings are drawn, sir, settlements made; 'tis too late, sir, and past all revocation.

Harc. Then so is my death.

Alith. I would not be unjust to him.

Harc. Then why to me so.

Alith. I have no obligations to you.

Harc. My love.

Alith. I had this before.

Harc. You never had it; he wants, you see, jealousy, the only infallible sign of it.

Alith. Love proceeds from esteem; he cannot distrust my virtue: besides, he loves me, or he would not marry me.

Harc. Marrying you is no more a sign of his love, than bribing your woman, that he may marry you, is a sign of his generosity. But if you take marriage for a sign of love, take it from me immediately.

Alith. No, now you have put a scruple in my head: but, in short, sir, to end our dispute, I must marry him! my reputation would suffer in the world else.

Harc. No; if you do marry him, with your pardon, madam, your reputation suffers in the world. 251

Alith. Nay, now you are rude, sir.—Mr. Sparkish, pray come hither; your friend here is very troublesome, and very loving.

Harc. Hold, hold.

[*Aside to Alitheia.*]

Moody. D'ye hear that, senseless puppy?

Spark. Why, d'ye think I'll seem jealous, like a country bumkin?

Moody. No, rather be dishonour'd, like a credulous driver.

Harc. Madam, you would not have been so little generous as to have told him?

Alith. Yes, since you could be so little generous as to wrong him.

Harc. Wrong him! no man can do't, he's beneath an injury; a bubble, a coward, a senseless idiot, a wretch so contemptible to all the world but you, that——

Alith. Hold, do not rail at him; for since he is like to be my husband, I am resolved to like him: nay, I think I am obliged to tell him, you are not his friend——Mr. Sparkish, Mr. Sparkish!

271

Spark. What, what: now, dear rogue, has not she wit?

Harc. Not so much as I thought, and hoped she had.

[*Surlily.*

Alith. Mr. Sparkish, do you bring people to rail at you?

Harc. Madam!

Spark. How! no; but if he does rail at me, 'tis but in jest, I warrant: what we wits do for one another, and never take any notice of it.

Alith. He spoke so scurrilously of you, I had no patience to hear him.

Moody. And he was in the right on't.

Alith. Besides, he has been making love to me.

Mood. And I told the fool so.

Harc. True, damn'd tell-tale woman.

[*Aside.*

Spark. Pshaw, to shew his parts—We wits rail and make love often, but to shew our parts; as we have no affections, so we have no malice, we——

Mood. Did you ever hear such an ass!

Alith. He said you were a wretch, below an injury.

Spark. Pshaw.

290

Harc. Madam!

Alith. A common bubble.

Spark. Pshaw.

Alith. A coward!

Spark. Pshaw, pshaw!

Alith. A senseless drivelling idiot.

Moody. True, true, true; all true.

Spark. How! did he disparage my parts? nay, then my honour's concerned. I can't put up that, sir, by the world; brother, help me to kill him. [Offers to draw.

Alith. Hold! hold!

301

Spark. What, what?

Alith. Hold! hold!

Moody. If Harcourt would but kill Sparkish, and run away with my sister, I should be rid of three plagues at once.

Alith. Indeed, to tell the truth, the gentleman said, after all, that what he spoke was but out of friendship to you.

Spark. How! say I am a fool, that is no wit, out of friendship to me?

Alith. Yes, to try whether I was concerned enough for you; and made love to me only to be satisfied of my virtue, for your sake.

Harc. Kind, however!

[Aside.

Spark. Nay, if it were so, my dear rogue, I ask thee pardon; but why would you not tell me so, faith?

Harc. Because I did not think on't, faith!

Spark. Come, Belville is gone away; Harcourt, let's be gone to the new play—Come, madam.

Alith. I will not go, if you intend to leave me alone in the box, and run all about the house, as you use to do. 320

Spark. Pshaw, I'll leave Harcourt with you in the box, to entertain you, and that's as good; if I sat in the box, I should be thought no critic—I must run about, my dear, and abuse the author—Come away, Harcourt, lead her down. Bye, brother. [Exeunt Harcourt, Sparkish, and Alitheia.

Moody. Bye, driveller. Well, go thy ways, for the flower of the true town fops, such as spend their estates before they come to 'em, and are cuckolds before they're married. But let me go look to my freehold. 329

Enter a Countryman.

Countr. Master, your worship's servant—here is the lawyer, counsellor gentleman, with a green bag full of papers, come again, and would be glad to speak to you.

Moody. Now, here's some other damn'd impediment, which the law has thrown in our way—I shall never marry the girl, nor get clear of the smoke and wickedness of this cursed town. Where is he?

Countr. He's below in a coach, with three other lawyer, counsellor gentlemen. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.

Changes to another Chamber. Enter Miss PEGGY and LUCY.

Lucy. What ails you, Miss Peggy? You are grown quite melancholy. 340

Peg. Would it not make any one melancholy to see your mistress Alithea go every day fluttering about abroad to plays and assemblies, and I know not what, whilst I must stay at home, like a poor, lonely, sullen bird in a cage?

Lucy. Dear Miss Peggy, I thought you chose to be confined: I imagined that you had been bred so young to the cage, that you had no pleasure in flying about, and hopping in the open air, as other young ladies, who go a little wild about this town.

Peg. Nay, I confess I was quiet enough, till somebody told me what pure lives the London ladies lead, with their

dancing meetings, and junketings, and dress'd every day in their best gowns; and I warrant you play at nine-pins every day in the week, so they do.

Lucy. To be sure, miss, you will lead a better life when join'd in holy wedlock with your sweet-temper'd guardian, the cheerful Mr. Moody.

Peg. I can't lead a worse, that's one good thing—but I must make the best of a bad market, for I can't marry nobody else. 360

Lucy. How so, miss? that's very strange.

Peg. Why, we have a contraction to one another—so we are as good as married, you know—

Lucy. I know it! Heav'n forbid, miss—

Peg. Heigho!

Lucy. Don't sigh, Miss Peggy—if that young gentleman, who was here just now, would take pity on me, I'd throw such a contract as yours behind the fire.

Peg. Lord bless us, how you talk!

Lucy. Young Mr. Belville would make you talk otherwise, if you knew him.

Peg. Mr. Belville!—where is he?—when did you see him? you have undone me, Lucy—where was he?—did he say any thing?

Lucy. Say any thing! very little, indeed—he's quite distracted, poor young creature! He was talking with your guardian just now.

Peg. The deuce he was!—but where was it, and when was it? 379

Lucy. In this house, five minutes ago, when your guardian turn'd you into your chamber, for fear of your being seen.

Peg. I knew something was the matter, I was in such a flutter.—But what did he say to my Bud?

Lucy. What do you call him Bud for? Bud means hus-

band, and he is not your husband yet—and I hope never will be : and if he was my husband, I'd bud him, a surly, unreasonable beast.

Peg. I'd call him any names, to keep him in good humour ; if he'd let me marry any body else (which I can't do) I'd call him husband as long as he lived.—But what said Mr. Belville to him ? 391

Lucy. I don't know what he said to him, but I'll tell you what he said to me, with a sigh, and his hand upon his breast, as he went out of the door :—If you ever were in love, young gentlewoman, (meaning me) and can pity a most faithful lover, tell the dear object of my affections—

Peg. Meaning me, Lucy ?

Lucy. Yes, you, to be sure. Tell the dear object of my affections, I live but upon the hopes that she is not married ; and when these hopes leave me—she knows the rest—then he cast up his eyes thus—gnash'd his teeth—struck his forehead—would have spoke again, but could not—fetch'd a deep sigh, and vanish'd.

Peg. That is really very fine—I am sure it makes my heart sink within me, and brings tears into my eyes—O, he's a charming, sweet—but hush, hush, I hear my husband !

Lucy. Don't call him husband. Go into the Park this evening, if you can.

Peg. Mum, mum. 410

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Come, what's here to do ? you are putting the town pleasures into her head, and setting her a longing.

Lucy. Yes, after nine-pins ; you suffer none to give her those longings you mean, but yourself.

Moody. Come, Mrs. Flippant, good precepts are lost when

bad examples are still before us: the liberty your mistress takes abroad makes her hanker after it, and out of humour at home: poor wretch! she desired not to come to London; I would bring her.

Lucy. O yes, you surfeit her with pleasures.

Moody. She has been this fortnight in town, and never desired, till this afternoon, to go abroad.

Lucy. Was she not at the play yesterday?

Moody. Yes, but she never ask'd me: I was myself the cause of her going.

Lucy. Then if she ask you again, you are the cause of her asking, and not my mistress.

Moody. Well, next week I shall be rid of you all, rid of this town, and my dreadful apprehensions. Come, be not melancholy, for thou shalt go into the country very soon, dearest. 431

Peg. Pish! what d'ye tell me of the country for!

Moody. How's this! what, flout at the country?

Peg. Let me alone, I am not well.

Moody. O, if that be all—what ails my dearest?

Peg. Truly, I don't know; but I have not been well since you told me there was a gallant at the play in love with me.

Moody. Ha!

Lucy. That's my mistress too.

Moody. Nay, if you are not well, but are so concern'd because a raking fellow chanced to lie, and say he liked you, you'll make me sick too.

Peg. Of what sickness?

Moody. O, of that which is worse than the plague, jealousy.

Peg. Pish, you jeer: I'm sure there's no such disease in your receipt-book at home.

Moody. No, thou never met'st with it, poor innocent.

Peg. Well, but pray, Bud, let's go to a play to-night.

Moody. No, no;—no more plays.—But why are you so eager to see a play? 451

Peg. Faith, dear, not that I care one pin for their talk there; but I like to look upon the player men, and would see, if I could, the gallant you say loves me: that's all, dear Bud.

Moody. Is that all, dear Bud?

Lucy. This proceeds from my mistress's example.

Peg. Let's go abroad, however, dear Bud, if we don't go to the play.

Moody. Come, have a little patience, and thou shalt go into the country next week.

Peg. Therefore I would see first some sights, to tell my neighbours of: nay, I will go abroad, that's once.

Moody. What, you have put this into her head.

Lucy. Heaven defend me, what suspicions! somebody has put more things into your head than you ought to have.

Moody. Your tongue runs too glibly, madam, and you have lived too long with a London lady, to be a proper companion for innocence. I am not overfond of your mistress.

Lucy. There's no love lost between us. 470

Moody. You admitted those gentlemen into the house, when I said I would not be at home; and there was the young fellow too, who behaved so indecently to my wife at the tavern window.

Lucy. Because you would not let him see your handsome wife out of your lodgings.

Peg. Why, O Lord! did the gentleman come hither to see me indeed?

Moody. No, no; you are not the cause of that damn'd question too.

Peg. Come, pray, Bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late; for I will go, that's flat and plain—only into the Park.

Moody. So! the obstinacy already of the town-wife; and I must, whilst she's here, humour her like one. [*Aside.*] How shall we do, that she may not be seen or known?

Lucy. Muffle her up with a bonnet and handkerchief, and I'll go with her to avoid suspicion.

Moody. No, no; I am obliged to you for your kindness, but she shan't stir without me.

Lucy. What will you do then?

490

Peg. What, shall we go? I am sick with staying at home: if I don't walk in the Park, I'll do nothing that I'm bid for a week—I won't be mop'd.

Lucy. O, she has a charming spirit! I could stand your friend now, and would, if you had ever a civil word to give me.

Moody. I'll give thee a better thing, I'll give thee a guinea for thy good advice, if I like it; and I can have the best of the college for the same money.

Lucy. I despise a bribe—when I am your friend, it shall be without fee or reward.

Peg. Don't be long then, for I will go out.

Lucy. The taylor brought home last night the clothes you intend for a present to your godson in the country.

Peg. You must not tell that, Lucy.

Lucy. But I will, madam—When you were with your lawyers last night, Miss Peggy, to divert me and herself, put 'em on, and they fitted her to a hair.

Moody. Thank you, thank you, Lucy, 'tis the luckiest thought! go this moment, Peggy, into your chamber, and put 'em on again—and you shall walk with me into the Park as my godson. Well thought of, Lucy—I shall love you for ever for this.

Peg. And so shall I too, Lucy, I'll put 'em on directly.
[*Going, returns.*] Suppose, Bud, I must keep on my petti-
coats, for fear of shewing my legs.

Moody. No, no, you fool, never mind your legs.

Peg. No more, I will then, Bud——This is pure. 518

[*Exit. rejoiced.*]

Moody. What a simpleton it is! Well, Lucy, I thank you
for the thought, and before I leave London, thou shalt be
convinced how much I am obliged to thee. [*Exit smiling.*]

Lucy. And before you leave London, Mr. Moody, I hope
I shall convince you how much you are obliged to me. [*Exit.*]

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter BELVILLE, and HARCOURT.

Belville.

AND the moment Moody left me, I took an opportunity of
conveying some tender sentiments thro' Lucy, to Miss Peggy,
and here I am, in expectation of seeing my country goddess.

Harc. And so to blind Moody, and take him off the scent of
your passion for this girl, and at the same time, to give me
an opportunity with Sparkish's mistress, (and of which I have
made the most) you hinted to him with a grave melancholy
face, that you were dying for his sister—Gad-a-mercy, ne-
phew! I will back thy modesty against any other in the three
kingdoms—It will do, Dick.

Belv. What could I do, uncle?—it was my last stake, and
I played for a great deal.

Harc. You mistake me, Dick——I don't say you could do
better——I only can't account for your modesty's doing so
much; you have done such wonders, that I, who am rather

bold than sheepish, have not yet ceased wondering at you. But do you think that you imposed upon him?

Belv. Faith, I can't say—I am rather doubtful; he said very little, grumbled much, shook his head, and shewed me the door. But what success have you had with Alithea?

Harc. Just enough to have a glimmering of hope, without having light enough to see an inch before my nose.—This day will produce something; Alithea is a woman of great honour, and will sacrifice her happiness to it, unless Sparkish's absurdity stands my friend, and does every thing that the fates ought to do for me.

Belv. Yonder comes the prince of coxcombs, and if your mistress and mine should by chance, be tripping this way, this fellow will spoil sport—let us avoid him—you can't cheat him before his face. 30

Harc. But I can tho', thanks to my wit, and his want of it.

Belv. But you cannot come near his mistress but in his company.

Harc. Still the better for me, nephew, for fools are most easily cheated, when they themselves are accessaries; and he is to be bubbled of his mistress, or of his money, the (common mistress) by keeping him company.

Enter SPARKISH.

Spark. Who's that that is to be bubbled? faith, let me snack; I han't met with a bubble since Christmas. 'Gad I think bubbles are like their brother-woodcocks, go out with the cold weatner.

Harc. O pox; he did not hear all, I hope. [*Aside to Belv.*

Spark. Come, you bubbling rogues, you, where do we sup? O Harcourt, my mistress tells me you have made love, fierce love to her last night, all the play long; ha, ha, ha! but I—

Harc. I make love to her!—

Spark. Nay, I forgive thee, and I know her, but I am sure I know myself. 49

Belv. Do you, sir? Then you are the wisest man in the world, and I honour you as such. [*Bowing.*]

Spark. O your servant, sir, you are at your raillery, are you? You can't oblige me more—I'm your man—He'll meet with his match—Ha! Harcourt!—Did not you hear me laugh prodigiously at the play last night?

Harc. Yes, and was very much disturbed at it.—You put the actors and audience into confusion—and all your friends out of countenance.

Spark. So much the better—I love confusion—and to see folks out of countenance—I was in tip-top spirits, faith, and said a thousand good things.

Belv. But I thought you had gone to plays to laugh at the poet's good things, and not at your own.

Spark. Your servant, sir: no, I thank you. 'Gad I go to a play, as to a country treat: I carry my own wine to one, and my own wit to t'other, or else I'm sure I should not be merry at either: and the reason why we are so often louder than the players, is, because we hate authors damnably.

Belv. But why should you hate the poor rogues? you have too much wit, and despise writing I'm sure. 79

Spark. O yes, I despise writing. But women, women, that make men do all foolish things, make 'em write songs too. Every body does it: 'tis e'en as common with lovers, as playing with fans, and you can no more help rhyming to your Phillis, than drinking to your Phillis.

Harc. But the poets damn'd your songs, did they?

Spark. O yes, damn the poets; they turn'd them into burlesque, as they call it: that burlesque, is a hocus pocus trick they have got, which, by the virtue of *hictius doctius*

topsy turvy, they make a clever witty thing, absolute nonsense! Do you know, Harcourt, that they ridiculed my last song, *twang, twang*, the best I ever wrote?

Harc. That may be, and be very easily ridiculed for all that.

Belv. Favour me with it, sir, I never heard it.

Spark. What, and have all the park about us?

Harc. Which you'll not dislike, and so, pr'ythee, begin.

Spark. I never am ask'd twice, and so have at you.

S O N G.

*Tell not me of the roses and lillies,
Which tinge the fair cheek of your Phillis,
Tell not me of the dimples, and eyes,
For which silly Corydon dies;
Let all whining lovers go hang,
My heart would you hit,
Tip your arrow with wit,
And it comes to my heart with a twang, twang,
And it comes to my heart with a twang.*

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*I am rock to the handsome, and pretty,
Can only be touch'd by the witty;
And beauty will ogle in vain,
The way to my heart's thro' my brain.
Let all whining lovers go hang,
We wits, you must know,
Have two strings to our bow,
To return them their darts with a twang, twang,
And return them their darts with a twang.*

At the end of the song Harcourt and Belville steal away from Sparkish, and leave him singing—He sinks his voice by degrees, at the surprise of their being gone; then

Enter HARCOURT and BELVILLE.

Spark. What the deuce did you go away for ?

Harc. Your mistress is coming.

Spark. The devil she is—O hide, hide me from her.

[Hides behind Harcourt.]

Harc. She sees you.

110

Spark. But I will not see her ; for I'm engaged, and at this instant.

[Looking at his watch.]

Harc. Pray first take me, and reconcile me to her.

Spark. Another time ; faith, it is to a lady, and one cannot make excuses to a woman.

Belv. You have need of 'em, I believe.

Spark. Pshaw, pr'ythee hide me.

Enter MOODY, PEGGY [in boy's clothes] and ALITHEA.

Harc. Your servant, Mr. Moody.

Moody. Come along——

[To Peggy.]

Peg. Lau !—what a sweet delightful place this is !

120

Moody. Come along, I say——don't stare about you so——you'll betray yourself——

[Exit Moody pulling Peggy, Alithea following.]

Harc. He does not know us——

Belv. Or he won't know us——

Spark. So much the better—— *[Exit Belv. after them.]*

Harc. Who is that pretty youth with him, Sparkish ?

Spark. Some relation of Peggy's, I suppose, for he is something like her in the face and gawkiness.

Re-enter BELVILLE.

Belv. By all my hopes, uncle—Peggy in boy's clothes—I am all over agitation.

[Aside to Harc.]

Harc. Be quiet, or you'll spoil all. They return——Alithea has seen you, Sparkish, and will be angry if you don't go

to her, besides I would fain be reconciled to her, which none but you can do, my dear friend.

Spark. Well, that's a better reason, dear friend: I would not go near her now for hers or my own sake; but I can deny you nothing: for tho' I have known thee a great while, never go, if I do not love thee as well as a new acquaintance.

Harc. I am obliged to you, indeed, my dear friend; I would be well with her, only to be well with thee still; for these ties to wives usually dissolve all ties to friends.

Spark. But they shan't, tho'—Come along. [*They retire.*]

Re-enter MOODY, PEGGY, and ALITHEA.

Moody. Sister, if you will not go, we must leave you: [*To Alithea.*—The fool her gallant and she will muster up all the young saunterers of this place. What a swarm of cuckolds and cuckold-makers are here! I begin to be uneasy. [*Aside.*] Come let's be gone, Peggy.

Peg. Don't you believe that, I han't half my bellyful of sights yet.

Moody. Then walk this way.

150

Peg. Lord, what a power of fine folks are here. And Mr. Belville, as I hope to be married.

[*Aside.*]

Moody. Come along, what are you a muttering at?

Peg. There's the young gentleman there, you were so angry about—that's in love with me.

Moody. No, no, he's a dangler after your sister—or pretends to be—but they are all bad alike—Come along, I say.

[*He pulls her away.*]

[*Exeunt Peggy, and Moody. Belville following.*]

SPARKISH, HARCOURT, and ALITHEA come forward.

Spark. Come, dear madam, for my sake you shall be reconciled to him.

159

Alib. For your sake I hate him.

Harc. That's something too cruel, madam, to hate me, for his sake.

Spark. Ay indeed, madam, too, too cruel to me, to hate my friend for my sake.

Alib. I hate him, because he is your enemy; and you ought to hate him too, for making love to me, if you love me.

Spark. That's a good one! I hate a man for loving you! If he did love you, 'tis but what he can't help; and 'tis your fault, not his, if he admires you. 170

Alib. Is it for your honour, or mine, to suffer a man to make love to me, who am to marry you to-morrow.

Harc. But why, dearest madam, will you be more concerned for his honour than he is himself? Let his honour alone for my sake and his. He has no honour.

Spark. How's that?

Harc. But what my dear friend can guard himself.

Spark. O ho—that's right again.

Alib. You astonish me, sir, with want of jealousy.

Spark. And you make me giddy, madam, with your jealousy and fears, and virtue and honour: 'Gad, I see virtue makes a woman as troublesome as a little reading or learning.

Harc. Come, madam, you see you strive in vain, to make him jealous of me; my dear friend is the kindest creature in the world to me.

Spark. Poor fellow!

Harc. But his kindness only is not enough for me, without your favour, your good opinion, dear madam: 'tis that must perfect my happiness. Good gentleman, he believes all I say: wou'd you would do so.—Jealous of me! I would not wrong him nor you for the world. 191

Spark. Look you there : hear him, hear him, and not walk away so. Come back again.

[*Alitheia walks carelessly to and fro.*]

Harc. I love you, madam, so——

Spark. How's that ! nay—now you begin to go too far indeed.

Harc. So much, I confess, I say I love you, that I would not have you miserable, and cast yourself away upon so unworthy and inconsiderable a thing as what you see here.

[*Clapping his hand on his breast, points to Sparkish.*]

Spark. No, faith, I believe thou wouldst not ; now his meaning is plain ; but I knew before thou wouldst not wrong me, nor her.

Harc. No, no, Heavens forbid the glory of her sex should fall so low, as into the embraces of such a contemptible wretch, the least of mankind—my dear friend here—I injure him.

Alith. Very well.

[*Embracing Sparkish.*]

Spark. No, no, dear friend, I knew it : madam, you see he will rather wrong himself than me in giving himself such names.

210

Alith. Do not you understand him yet ?

Spark. Come, come, you shall stay till he has saluted you ; that I may be assured you are friends, after his honest advice and declaration : come, pray, madam, be friends with him.

Enter MOODY and PEGGY. BELVILLE at a distance.

Moody. What, invite your wife to kiss men ? Monstrous ! Are you not ashamed ?

Spark. Are you not ashamed, that I should have more confidence in the chastity of your family, than you have ? You must not teach me, I am a man of honour, sir, though I am frank and free ; I am frank, sir——

220

Moody. Very frank, sir, to share your wife with your friends.
—You seem to be angry, and yet won't go. [*To Alithea.*

Alithea. No impertinence shall drive me away.

Moody. Because you like it.—But you ought to blush at exposing your wife as you do.

Spark. What then? It may be I have a pleasure in't, as I have to shew fine clothes at a play-house, the first day, and count money before poor rogues.

Moody. He that shews his wife or money, will be in danger of having them borrowed sometimes. 330

Spark. I love to be envied, and would not marry a wife that I alone could love. Loving alone is as dull as eating alone; and so good-night, for I must to Whitehall.—Madam, I hope you are now reconciled to my friend; and so I wish you a good-night, madam, and sleep if you can; for to-morrow, you know, I must visit you early with a canonical gentleman. Good-night, dear Harcourt—remember to send your brother. [*Exit Sparkish.*

Harc. You may depend upon me. Madam, I hope you will not refuse my visit to-morrow, if it should be earlier, with a canonical gentleman, than Mr. Sparkish?

Moody. This gentlewoman is yet under my care, therefore you must yet forbear your freedom with her.

Harc. Must, sir!

Moody. Yes, sir, she is my sister.

Harc. 'Tis well she is, sir—for I must be her servant, sir. Madam——

Moody. Come away, sister, we had been gone if it had not been for you, and so avoided these lewd rake-hells, who seem to haunt us. 250

Harc. I see a little time in the country makes a man turn wild and unsociable, and only fit to converse with his horses, dogs, and his herds.

Moody. I have business, sir, and must mind it: your business is pleasure, therefore you and I must go different ways.

Harc. Well, you may go on; but this pretty young gentleman [*Takes hold of Peggy.*] shall stay with us, for I suppose his business is the same with ours, pleasure.

Moody. 'Sdeath, he knows her, she carries it so sillily; yet if he does not, I should be more silly to discover it first. [*Aside.*] Come, come.

Harc. Had you not rather stay with us? [*To Peggy.*]—Pr'ythee, who is this pretty young fellow?

Moody. One to whom I am a guardian—I wish I could keep her out of your hands. [*Aside.*]

Harc. Who is he? I never saw any thing so pretty in all my life.

Moody. Pshaw, do not look upon him so much, he's a poor bashful youth, you'll put him out of countenance. 270

[*Offers to take her away.*]

Harc. Here, nephew, let me introduce this young gentleman to your acquaintance—You are very like, and of the same age. and should know one another—Salute him, Dick, à la Française. [*Belville kisses her.*]

Moody. I hate French fashions. Men kiss one another.

[*Endeavours to take hold of her.*]

Peg. I am out of my wits—What do you kiss me for? I am no woman.

Harc. But you are ten times handsomer.

Peg. Nay, now you jeer one; and pray don't jeer me.

Harc. Kiss him again, Dick. 280

Moody. No, no, no; come away, come away. [*To Peggy.*]

Harc. Why, what haste are you in? Why won't you let me talk with him?

Moody. Because you'll debauch him, he's yet young and

innocent. How she gazes upon him ! The devil ! [*Aside.*]
Come, pray let him go, I cannot stay fooling any longer ; I
tell you my wife stays supper for us.

Harc. Does she ? Come, then, we'll all go sup with her.

Moody. No, no—now I think on't, having staid so long
for us, I warrant she's gone to bed.—I wish she and I were
well out of your hands. [*Aside.*

Harc. Well then, if she be gone to bed—I wish her and
you a good-night. But pray, young gentleman, present my
humble service to her.

Peg. Thank you heartily, sir. [*Bowing.*

Moody. 'Sdeath, she will discover herself yet, in spite of
me. [*Aside.*

Belv. And mine too, sir.

Peg. That I will, indeed. [*Bowing.*

Harc. Pray, give her this kiss for me. [*Kisses Peggy.*

Moody. O Heavens ! what do I suffer ! 301

Belv. And this for me. [*Kisses Peggy.*

Peg. Thank you, sir. [*Curtesies.*

Moody. O the idiot—now 'tis out—Ten thousand cankers
gnow away their lips. Come, come, driveller.

[*Exeunt Moody, Peggy, and Alithea.*

Harc. and Belv. Ha, ha, ha !—— [*Exeunt.*

Re enter MOODY, PEGGY, and ALITHEA.

Moody. So, they are gone at last.—Sister, stay with Peggy
—till I find my servant——don't let her stir an inch, I'll be
back directly. [*Exit Moody.*

Re-enter HARCOURT and BELVILLE.

Harc. What, not gone yet ?—Nephew, shew the young
gentleman Rosamond's pond, while I speak another word to
this lady.

Belv. Shall I have that pleasure ?

Peg. With all my heart and soul, sir.

[*Exeunt Belville and Peggy.*]

Alith. I cannot consent to it, indeed.

Harc. Let 'em look upon the place where so many despairing lovers have been destroy'd—You must indulge them—and me too, in a few words.

[*Alithea and Harcourt struggle.*]

Alith. My brother will go distracted.

Harc. My nephew is a very modest young man, you may depend upon his prudence. 320

Alith. Modest, prudent, and your nephew—I can't believe it, and I must follow them—— [Going.

Re-enter MOODY.

Moody. Where ! how !——what's become of—gone—whither ?——

Alith. In the next walk only, brother.

Moody. Only, only, where, where ? [Exit.

Harc. What's the matter with him ? Why so much concerned ? But, dearest madam——

Re-enter MOODY.

Moody. Gone, gone, not to be found ; quite gone : ten thousand plagues go with 'em : which way went they ? 330

Alith. But in t'other walk, brother.

Moody. T'other walk——t'other devil. Where are they, I say ?

Alith. You are too abusive, brother, and too violent about trifles.

Moody. You know where they are, you infamous wretch, eternal shame of your family ; which you do not dishonour

enough yourself, you think, but you must help her to it too, thou legion of——

Alith. Good brother——

Moody. Damn'd, damn'd sister!—— [Exit.

Alith. Shew me to my chair, Mr. Harcourt——His scurrility has overpower'd me——I will get red of his tyranny and your importunities, and give my hand to Sparkish to-morrow morning. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

Changes to another part of the Park. Enter BELVILLE and Miss PEGGY.

Belv. No disguise could conceal you from my heart; I pretended not to know you, that I might deceive the dragon that continually watches over you—but now he's asleep, let us fly from misery to happiness. 349

Peg. Indeed, Mr. Belville, as well as I like you, I can't think of going away with you so—and as much as I hate my guardian, I must take leave of him a little handsomely, or he will kill me, so he will.

Belv. But, dear Miss Peggy, think of your situation; if we don't make the best use of this opportunity, we never may have another.

Peg. Aye, but Mr. Belville—I am as good as married already—my guardian has contracted me, and there wants nothing but church ceremony to make us one—I call him husband, and he calls me wife already: he made me do so:—and we had been married in church long ago, if the writings could have been finished. 362

Belv. That's his deceit, my sweet creature—He pretends to have married you, for fear of your liking any body else—

You have a right to choose for yourself, and there is no law in heaven or earth that binds you before marriage to a man you cannot like.

369

Peg. I'fack, no more I believe it does; sister Alithea's maid has told me as much—she's a very sensible girl.

Belv. You are in the very jaws of perdition, and nothing but running away can avoid it—the law will finish your chains to-morrow, and the church will rivet them the day after—Let us secure our happiness by escape, and love and fortune will do the rest for us.

Peg. These are fine sayings, to be sure, Mr. Belville; but how shall we get my fortune out of Bud's clutches? We must be a little cunning; 'tis worth trying for—We can at any time run away without it.

Belv. I see by your fears, my dear Peggy, that you live in awe of this brutal guardian; and if he has you once more in his possession, both you and your fortune are secured to him for ever.

Peg. Ay, but it shan't tho'—I thank him for that.

Belv. If you marry without his consent, he can but seize upon half your fortune—The other half, and a younger brother's fortune, with a treasure of love, are our own.—Take it, my sweetest Peggy, and this moment, or we shall be divided for ever.

[*Kneels and presses her hand.*]

Peg. I'fackins but we won't—Your fine talk has bewitch'd me.

390

Belv. 'Tis you have bewitch'd me—thou dear, enchanting, sweet simplicity—Let us fly with the wings of love to my house there, and we shall be safe for ever.

Peg. And so we will then—there squeeze me again by the hand; now run away with me, and if my guardy follows us, the devil take the hindmost, I say. [*Going.*] Boo! here he is.

Enter MOODY hastily, and meets them.

Moody. O! there's my stray'd sheep, and the wolf again in sheep's clothing!—Now I have recovered her, I shall come to my senses again—Where have you been, you puppy?
401

Peg. Been, Bud?—We have been hunting all over the park to find you.

Belv. From one end to the other, sir. *[Confusedly.]*

Moody. But not where I was to be found, you young devil you—Why did you start when you saw me?

Peg. I'm always frighten'd when I see you, and if I did not love you so well—I should run away from you, so I should. *[Pouting.]*

Moody. But I'll take care you don't.

Peg. This gentleman has a favour to beg of you, Bud?

[Belville makes signs of dislike.]

Moody. I am not in the humour to grant favours to young gentlemen, tho' you may. What have you been doing with this young lady?—gentleman, I would say—Blisters on my tongue!

Peg. Fie, Bud, you have told all.

Belv. I have been as civil as I could to the young stranger; and if you'll permit me, I will take the trouble off your hands, and shew the young spark Rosamond's pond, for he has not seen it yet—Come, pretty youth will you go with me?

Peg. As my guardian pleases. 421

Moody. No, no, it does not please me—whatever I think he ought to see, I shall shew him myself—You may visit Rosamond's pond, if you will—and the bottom of it, if you will—And so, sir, your humble servant.

Exeunt Moody, with Peggy under his arm.—

Belville a contrary way.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

MOODY'S House. Enter LUCY and ALITHEA.

Lucy.

WELL, madam, now I have dress'd you, and set you out with so many ornaments, and spent so much time upon you, and all this for no other purpose but to bury you alive; for I look upon Mr. Sparkish's bed to be little better than a grave.

Alith. Hold your peace.

Lucy. Nay, madam, I will ask you the reason why you would banish poor Mr. Harcourt for ever from your sight? how could you be so hard-hearted.

Alith. 'Twas because I was not hard-hearted. 10

Lucy. No, no; 'twas stark love and kindness, I warrant?

Alith. It was so; I would see him no more, because I love him.

Lucy. Hey-day! a very pretty reason.

Alith. You do not understand me.

Lucy. I wish you may yourself.

Alith. I was engaged to marry, you see, another man, whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive, or injure.

Lucy. Can there be a greater cheat or wrong done to a man, than to give him your person, without your heart? I should make a conscience of it. 21

Alith. I'll retrieve it for him after I am married.

Lucy. The woman that marries to love better, will be as much mistaken, as the rake that marries to live better.

Alith. What nonsense you talk!

Lucy. 'Tis a melancholy truth, madam—Marrying to increase love, is like gaming to become rich—Alas! you only

lose what little stock you had before—There are many woeful examples of it in this righteous town !

Alith. I find by your rhetoric you have been bribed to betray me.

Lucy. Only by his merit, that has bribed your heart, you see, against your word and rigid honour.

Alith. Come, pray talk no more of honour, nor Mr. Harcourt ; I wish the other would come to secure my fidelity to him, and his right in me.

Lucy. You will marry him then ?

Alith. Certainly ; I have given him already my word, and will my hand too, to make it good when he comes.

Lucy. Well, I wish I may never stick a pin more, if he be not an errant natural to t'other fine gentleman. 41

Alith. I own he wants the wit of Harcourt, which I will dispense withal for another want he has, which is want of jealousy, which men of wit seldom want.

Lucy. Lord, madam, what should you do with a fool to your husband ? You intend to be honest don't you ? Then that husbandly virtue, credulity, is thrown away upon you.

Alith. He only that could suspect my virtue, should have cause to do it ; 'tis Sparkish's confidence in my truth, that obliges me to be faithful to him.

Lucy. What, faithful to a creature who is incapable of loving and esteeming you as he ought ! To throw away your beauty, wit, accomplishments, sweet temper——

Alith. Hold your tongue.

Lucy. That you know I can't do, madam ; and upon this occasion, I will talk for ever—What, give yourself away to one, that poor I, your maid, would not accept of ?

Alith. How, Lucy !

Lucy. I would not, upon my honour, madam ; 'tis never too late to repent—Take a man, and give up your coxcomb, I say. 61

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mr. Sparkish, with company, madam, attends you below.

Alitb. I will wait upon 'em. [*Exit Servant.*] My heart begins to fail me, but I must go through with it. Go with me, Lucy. [*Exit.*]

Lucy. Not I, indeed, madam——If you will leap the precipice, you shall fall by yourself——What excellent advice have I thrown away!——So I'll e'en take it where it will be more welcome.——Miss Peggy is bent upon mischief against her guardian, and she can't have a better privy-counsellor than myself—I must be busy one way or another. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

Another Chamber in MOODY'S House. Enter MOODY and PEGGY.

Moody. I saw him kiss your hand before you saw me. This pretence of liking my sister was all a blind—the young abandon'd hypocrite! [*Aside.*] Tell me, I say, for I know he likes you, and was hurrying you to his house—tell me, I say——

Peg. Lord, han't I told it a hundred times over?

Moody. I would try if, in the repetition of the ungrateful tale, I could find her altering it in the least circumstance; for if her story be false, she is so too. [*Aside.*] Come, how was't, baggage?

82

Peg. Lord, what pleasure you take to hear it, sure?

Moody. No, you take more in telling it, I find; but speak, how was't? No lies—I saw him kiss you—he kiss'd you before my face.

Peg. Nay, you need not be so angry with him neither; for, to say truth, he has the sweetest breath I ever knew.

Moody. The devil!—you were satisfied with it then, and would do it again?— 90

Peg. Not unless he should force me.

Moody. Force you, changeling.

Peg. If I had struggled too much, you know—he would have known I had been a woman; so I was quiet, for fear of being found out.

Moody. If you had been in petticoats, you would have knock'd him down, would not you?

Peg. With what, Bud?—I could not help myself—besides, he did it so modestly, and blush'd so—that I almost thought him a girl in men's clothes, and upon his mummery too, as well as me—and if so, there was no harm done, you know.

Moody. This is worse and worse—so 'tis plain she loves him, yet she has not love enough to make her conceal it from me; but the sight of him will increase her aversion for me, and love for him; and that love instruct her how to deceive me, and satisfy him, all idiot as she is: Love, 'twas he gave women first their craft, their art of deluding; out of Nature's hands they came plain, open, silly, and fit for slaves, as she and Heav'n intended 'em, but damn'd Love—well—I must strangle that little monster, whilst I can deal with him. [*Aside.*—Go, fetch pen, ink, and paper, out of the next room.

Peg. Yes, I will, Bud. What's the matter now? [*Aside.*

Moody. Why don't you go?

Peg. I'm going.

[*Exit.*

Moody. This young fellow loves her, and she loves him—the rest is all hypocrisy—How the young modest villain endeavour'd to deceive me! But I'll crush this mischief in

in the shell—Why should women have more invention in love than men? It can only be because they have more desire, more soliciting passions, more of the devil. [*Aside.*]

Enter PEGGY, with pen, ink, and paper.

Moody. Come, minx, sit down and write.

Peg. Aye, dear, dear Bud; but I can't do't very well.

Moody. I wish you could not at all.

Peg. But what should I write for?

Moody. I'll have you write a letter to this young man.

Peg. O Lord, to the young gentleman a letter.

Moody. Yes, to the young gentleman.

Peg. Lord, you do but jeer: sure you jest.

130

Moody. I am not so merry: come, sit down, and write as I bid you.

Peg. What, do you think I am a fool?

Moody. She's afraid I would not dictate any love to him, therefore she's unwilling. [*Aside.*]*—*But you had best begin.

Peg. Indeed and indeed but I won't, so I won't.

Moody. Why?

Peg. Because he's in town; you may send for him here, if you will.

Moody. Very well, you would have him brought to you?—Is it come to this; I say, take the pen and ink and write, or you'll provoke me.

Peg. Lord, what do you make a fool of me for? Don't I know that letters are never writ but from the country to London, and from London into the country! Now, he's in town, and I am in town too; therefore I can't write to him, you know.

Moody. So, I am glad it is no worse; she is innocent enough yet. [*Aside.*] Yes, you may, when your husband bids, write letters to people who are in town.

150

Peg. O may I so ! then I am satisfied.

Moody. Come, begin—Sir—

[Dictates.

Peg. Shan't I say, *Dear Sir* ? you know one says always something more than bare Sir.

Moody. Write as I bid you, or I will write something with this penknife in your face.

Peg. Nay, good Bud—Sir—

[Writes.

Moody. *Though I suffer'd last night your nauseous loath'd kisses and embraces—Write !*

Peg. Nay, why should I say so ? you know I told you he had a sweet breath.

Moody. Write !

Peg. Let me put out *loath'd*.

Moody. Write, I say.

Peg. Well then.

[Writes.

Moody. Let me see what you have writ. *Tho' I suffer'd last night your kisses and embraces—[Reads the paper.]* Thou impudent creature, where is *nauseous* and *loath'd* ?

Peg. I can't abide to write such filthy words. 169

Moody. Once more write as I'd have you, and question it not, or I will spoil your writing with this ; I will stab out those eyes that cause my mischief. [Holds up the pen-knife.

Peg. O Lord, I will.

Moody. So—so—let's see now ! *Tho' I suffer'd last night your nauseous loath'd kisses and embraces—Go on ;—yet I would not have you presume that you shall ever repeat them—so—*

[She writes.

Peg. I have writ it.

Moody. O then—I then concealed myself from your knowledge, to avoid your insolencies—

[She writes.

Peg. To avoid—

Moody. *Your insolencies—*

Peg. *Your insolencies—*

[Writes.

Mood. *The same reason, now I am out of your hands—*

Peg. So——

[*She writes.*]

Moody. *Makes me own to you my unfortunate—though innocent frolic of being in man's clothes.*

[*She writes.*]

Peg. So——

Moody, *That you may for evermore——*

Peg. *Evermore?*

189

Moody. *Evermore cease to pursue her, who hates and detests you.*

[*She writes.*]

Peg. So—h.

[*Sighs.*]

Moody. *What do you sigh for?—detests you—as much as she loves her husband and her honour——*

Peg. I vow, husband, he'll ne'er believe I should write such a letter.

Moody. *What, he'd expect a kinder from you? Come, now your name only.*

Peg. *What, shan't I say your most faithful humble servant till death?*

Moody. *No, tormenting fiend——Her stile, I find, would be very soft. [Aside.] Come, wrap it up now, whilst I go fetch wax and a candle, and write on the outside, For Mr. Belville.*

[*Exit Moody.*]

Peg. *For Mr. Belville.—So—I am glad he is gone—Hark! I hear a noise.*

Moody. [*within.*] *Well, well, but can't you call again——Well, walk in then.*

208

Peg. [*goes to the door.*] *I'feck there's folks with him——that's pure——now I may think a little——Why should I send dear Mr. Belville such a letter?——Can one have no shift? ah! a London woman would have had a hundred presently.—Stay——what if I should write a letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon it too?——Ay, but then my guardian would see't——I don't know what to do——But*

yet y'vads I'll try, so I will—for I will not send this letter to poor Mr. Belville, come what will on't. [*She writes, and repeats what she writes.*] Dear, sweet Mr. Belville—so—My guardian would have me send you a base, rude letter, but I won't—so—and would have me say, I hate you—but I won't—there—for I'm sure if you and I were in the country at cards together—so—I could not help treading on your toe under the table—so pray keep at home, for I shall be with you as soon as I can—so no more at present from one who am, dear, dear, poor, dear Mr. Belville, your loving friend till death, Margaret Thrift.—So—now wrap it up just like t'other—so—now write, For Mr. Belville—But, oh! what shall I do with it? for here comes my guardian.

[*Puts her letter in her bosom.*]

Re-enter MOODY, with a candle and sealing-wax.

Moody. I have been detained by a sparkish coxcomb, who pretended to visit me, but I fear 'twas to my wife. [*Aside.*] What have you done? 231

Peg. Ay, ay, Bud, just now.

Moody. Let's see't; what do you tremble for?—

[*He opens and reads the first letter.*]

Peg. So I had been served if I had given him this. [*Aside.*]

Moody. Come, where's the wax and seal?

Peg. Lord, what shall I do now? Nay, then I have it—[*Aside.*]—Pray, let me see't. Lord, you think me so errant a fool, I cannot seal a letter; I will do't, so I will.

[*Snatches the letter from him, changes it for the other, seals it, and delivers it to him.*]

Moody. Nay, I believe you will learn that and other things too, which I would not have you.

Peg. So, han't I done it curiously? I think I have—

there's my letter going to Mr. Belville, since he'll needs have me send letters to folks. [Aside.

Moody. 'Tis very well ; but I warrant you would not have it go now ? 245

Peg. Yes, indeed, but I would, Bud, now.

Moody. Well, you are a good girl then, Come, let me lock you up in your chamber, till I come back ; and be sure you come not within three strides of the window, when I am gone ; for I have a spy in the street. [*Puts her into the chamber.*] At least 'tis fit she thinks so ; if we do not cheat women, they'll cheat us.—Now I have secured all within, I'll deal with the foe without, with false intelligence. [Exit.

SCENE III.

Changes to BELVILLE'S Lodgings. Enter LUCY and BELVILLE.

Lucy. I run great risques, to be sure, to serve the young lady and you, sir—but I know you are a gentleman of honour, and would scorn to betray a friend who means you well, and is above being mercenary.

Belv. As you are not mercenary, Mrs. Lucy, I ought to be the more generous—give me leave to present you with this trifle, [*gives a ring.*] not as a reward for your services, but as a small token of friendship. 261

Lucy. Though I scorn to be bribed in any cause, yet I am proud to accept it as a mark of your regard, and as such shall keep it for your sake—and now to business.

Belv. But has the dear creature resolved ?

Lucy. Has she—why, she will run away and marry you, in spite of your teeth, the first moment she can break prison—so you, in your turn, must take care not to have

your qualms—I have known several bold gentlemen not able to draw their swords, when a challenge has come too quick upon 'em. 271

Belv. I assure you, Mrs. Lucy, that I am no bully in love, and Miss Peggy will meet with her match, come when she will.

Lucy. Ay, so you all say, but talking does no business—Stay at home till you hear from us.

Belv. Blessings on thee, Lucy, for the thought.

MOODY speaking without.

Moody. But I must and will see him, let him have what company he will.

Lucy. As I hope to be married, Mr. Belville, I hear Mr. Moody's voice—Where shall I hide myself?—if he sees me, we are all undone.

Belv. This is our cursed luck again—What the devil can he want here?—I have lost my senses—get into this closet till he's gone. [*Puts Lucy into the closet.*] This visit means something; I am quite confounded—Don't you stir, Lucy—I must put the best face upon the matter—Now for it—
[*Takes a book and reads.*]

Enter MOODY.

Moody. You will excuse me, sir, for breaking thro' forms, and your servant's entreaties, to have the honour—but you are alone, sir—your fellow told me below that you were with company. 291

Belv. Yes, sir, the best company. [*Shows his book.*] When I converse with my betters, I choose to have 'em alone.

Moody. And I chose to interrupt your conversation! the business of my errand must plead my excuse.

Belv. You shall be always welcome to me; but you seem

ruffled, sir ; what brings you hither, and so seemingly out of humour ?

Moody. Your impertinency—I beg pardon—your modesty, I mean.

300

Belv. My impertinency !

Moody. Your impertinency !

Belv. Sir, from the peculiarity of your character, and your intimacy with my uncle, I shall allow you great privileges ; but you must consider, youth has its privileges too ; and as I have not the honour of your acquaintance, I am not oblig'd to bear with your ill-humours or your ill-manners.

Moody. They who wrong me, young man, must bear with both ! and if you had not made too free with me, I should have taken no liberties with you.

Belv. I could have wish'd, sir, to have found you a little more civil, the first time I have the honour of a visit from you.

Moody. If that is all you want, young gentleman, you will find me very civil indeed ! There, sir, read that, and let your modesty declare whether I want either kindness or civility—Look you there, sir.

[Gives a letter.

Belv. What is it ?

Moody. Only a love-letter, sir ;—and from my wife.

Belv. How, is it from your wife ?—hum and hum—

[Reads.

Moody. Even from my wife, sir ; am not I wondrous kind and civil to you now too ? But you'll not think her so. [Aside.

Belv. Ha ! is this a trick of his or her's.

[Aside.

Moody. The gentleman's surpris'd, I find ? what, you expected a kinder letter ?

Belv. No, faith, not I ; how could I ?

Moody. Yes, yes, I'm sure you did ; a man so young, and well made as you are, must needs be disappointed, if the wo-

men declare not their passion at the first sight or opportunity. 331

Belv. But what should this mean? It seems he knows not what the letter contains! [*Aside.*]

Moody. Come, ne'er wonder at it so much.

Belv. Faith, I can't help it.

Moody. Now, I think, I have deserv'd your infinite friendship and kindness, and have shew'd myself sufficiently an obliging kind friend and husband—am I not so, to bring a letter from my wife to her gallant?

Belv. Ay, indeed, you are the most obliging kind friend and husband in the world; ha, ha, ha! Pray, however, present my humble service to her, and tell her, I will obey her letter to a tittle, and fulfil her desires, be what they will, or with what difficulty soever I do't; and you shall be no more jealous of me, I warrant her, and you.

Moody. Well then, fare you well, and play with any man's honour but mine, kiss any man's wife but mine, and welcome—so, Mr. Modesty, your servant.

[*As Moody is going out he is met by Sparkish.*]

Spark. So, brother-in-law, that was to have been, I have follow'd you from home to Belville's: I have strange news for you.

Moody. What, are you wiser than you were this morning?

Spark. Faith, I don't know but I am, for I have lost your sister, and I shan't eat half an ounce the less at dinner for it; there's philosophy for you.

Moody. Insensibility, you mean—I hope you don't mean to use my sister ill, sir?

Spark. No, sir, she has used me ill; she's in her tantrums—I have had a narrow escape, sir.

Moody. If thou art endow'd with the smallest portion of understanding, explain this riddle. 261

Belv. Ay, ay, pr'ythee, Sparkish, condescend to be intelligible.

Spark. Why, you must know, we had settled to be married—it is the same thing to me, whether I am married or not—I have no particular fancy one way or another, and so I told your sister; off or on, 'tis the same thing to me; but the thing was fix'd, you know—You and my aunt brought it about—I had no hand in it. And, to shew you that I was as willing to marry your sister as any other woman, I suffered the law to tie me up to hard terms, and the church would have finish'd me still to harder—but she was taken with her tantrums!

Moody. Damn your tantrums—come to the point.

Spark. Your sister took an aversion to the parson, Frank Harcourt's brother—abused him like a pickpocket, and swore 'twas Harcourt himself.

Moody. And so it was, for I saw him.

Spark. Why, you are as mad as your sister—I tell you it was Ned, Frank's twin brother. 38a

Moody. What, Frank told you so?

Spark. Ay, and Ned too—they were both in a story.

Moody. What an incorrigible fellow!—Come, come, I must be gone.

Spark. Nay, nay, you shall hear my story out,—She walk'd up within pistol-shot of the church—then twirl'd round upon her heel—call'd me every name she could think of; and when she had exhausted her imagination, and tired her tongue—no easy matter, let me tell you—she call'd her chair, sent her footman to buy a monkey before my face, then bid me good-morrow with a sneer, and left us with our mouths open in the middle of a hundred people, who were all laughing at us! If these are not tantrums, I don't know what are.

Moody. Ha, ha, ha! I thank thee, Sparkish, from my soul; 'tis a most exquisite story; I have not had such a laugh for this half year—Thou art a most ridiculous puppy, and I am infinitely obliged to thee; ha, ha, ha! [*Exit Moody.*

Spark. Did you ever hear the like, Belville? 399

Belv. O yes; how is it possible to hear such a foolish story, and see thy foolish face, and not laugh at 'em? Ha, ha, ha!

LUCY in the closet laughs.

Spark. Hey-day! what's that? What, have you raised a devil in the closet, to make up a laughing chorus of me?—I must take a peep— [*Going to the closet.*

Belv. Indeed but you must not.

Spark. 'Twas a woman's voice.

Belv. So much the better for me.

Spark. Pr'ythee introduce me. 409

Belv. Though you take a pleasure in exposing your ladies, I choose to conceal mine. So, my dear Sparkish, lest the lady should be sick by too long a confinement, and laughing heartily at you—I must entreat you to withdraw—Pr'ythee, excuse me, I must laugh—ha, ha, ha, ha!

Spark. Do you know that I begin to be angry, Belville?

Belv. I can't help that; ha, ha, ha!

Spark. My character's at stake—I shall be thought a damn'd silly fellow—I will call Alithea to an account directly.

[*Exit.*

Belv. Ha, ha, ha!

LUCY peeping out.

Lucy. Ha, ha, ha! O dear sir, let me have my laugh out, or I shall burst—What an adventure! [*Laughs.*

Belv. My sweet Peggy has sent me the kindest letter—and by the dragon himself—There's a spirit for you!

Lucy. There's simplicity for you! Shew me a town-bred

girl with half the genius—Send you a love-letter, and by a jealous guardian too! ha, ha, ha! 'Tis too much—too much—Ha, ha, ha—Well, Mr. Belville—the world goes as it should do—my mistress will exchange her fool for a wit, Miss Peggy her brute for a pretty young fellow; I shall dance at two weddings—be well rewarded by both parties—get a husband myself, and be as happy as the best of you—and so your humble servant. [Exit.]

Belv. Success attend you, Lucy—

[Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I.

MOODY's House. PEGGY alone, leaning on her elbow. A table, pen, ink, and paper.

Peggy.

WELL, 'tis e'en so, I have got the London disease they call love; I am sick of my guardian, and dying for Mr. Belville! I have heard this distemper call'd a fever, but methinks it is like an ague; for, when I think of my guardian, I tremble, and am in a cold sweat; but when I think of my gallant, dear Mr. Belville, my hot fit comes, and I am all in a fever indeed: my own chamber is tedious to me, and I would fain be removed to his, and then methinks I should be very well. Ah! poor Mr. Belville! Well, I cannot, will not stay here; therefore I'll make an end of my letter to him, which shall be a finer letter than my last, because I have studied it like any thing. Oh! sick, sick!

12

Enter MOODY, who, seeing her writing, steals softly behind her, and looking over her shoulder, snatches the paper from her.

Moody. What, writing more letters?

Peg. O Lord! Bud, why d'ye fright me so?

[She offers to run out, he stops her and reads.]

Moody. How's this! nay, you shall not stir, madam.—
 Dear, dear, dear Mr. Belville,—very well, I have taught you
 to write letters to good purpose—but let's see't.—[*Reads.*]—
First, I am to beg your pardon for my boldness in writing to you,
which I'd have you to know I would not have done, had you not
said first you loved me so extremely; which, if you do, you will
never suffer me to be another man's, who I loathe, nauseate, and
detest: (now you can write these filthy words,)—But what
 follows?—therefore, I hope you will speedily find some way to free
 me from this unfortunate match, which was never, I assure you,
 of my choice, but I'm afraid 'tis already too far gone; however,
 if you love me, as I do you, you will try what you can do; you must
 help me away before to-morrow, or else, alas! I shall be for ever
 out of your reach, for I can defer no longer our—our—(what is
 to follow our—speak what) our journey into the country, I
 suppose.—Oh, woman, damn'd woman! and love, damn'd
 love! their old tempter; for this is one of his miracles: in
 a moment he can make those blind that could see, and those
 see that were blind; those dumb that could speak, and those
 prattle that were dumb before.—But make an end of your
 letter, and then I'll make an end of you thus, and all my
 plagues together. [Draws his sword.]

Peg. O Lord! O Lord! you are such a passionate man,
 Bud! 38

Moody. Come, take the pen, and make an end of the letter,
 just as you intended; if you are false in a tittle, I shall soon
 perceive it, and punish you with this, as you deserve. [*Lays*
his hand on his sword] Write what was to follow—let's see
 —(You must make haste and help me away before to-morrow, or
 else I shall be for ever out of your reach, for I can defer no longer
 our,) what follows our? [Peggy takes the pen and writes.]

Peg. Must all out then, Bud?—Look you there then.

Moody. Let's see—(for I can defer no longer our wedding—

Your slighted Alithea.) What's the meaning of this, my sister's name to't? speak, unriddle.

Peg. Yes, indeed, Bud.

Moody. But why her name to't? speak——speak, I say. 50

Peg. Ay, but you'll tell her again: if you would not tell her again——

Moody. I will not; I am stunn'd, my head turns round. Speak.

Peg. Won't you tell her indeed, and indeed?

Moody. No; speak, I say.

Peg. She'll be angry with me; but I had rather she should be angry with me than you, Bud. And to tell you the truth, 'twas she made me write the letter, and taught me what I should write.

Moody. Ha!—I thought the style was somewhat better than her own. [*Aside.*] Could she come to you to teach you, since I had lock'd you up alone?

Peg. Oh, thro' the key-hole, Bud.

Moody. But why should she make you write a letter for her to him, since she can write herself?

Peg. Why, she said because——for I was unwilling to do it.

Moody. Because, what——because——

Peg. Because, lest Mr. Belville, as he was so young, should be inconstant, and refuse her, or be vain afterwards, and shew the letter, she might disown it, the hand not being hers.

Moody. Belville again!——Am I to be deceived again with that young hypocrite?

Peg. You have deceived yourself, Bud, you have indeed—I have kept the secret for my sister's sake, as long as I could——but you must know it——and shall know it too. [*Cries.*

Moody. Dry your eyes. 79

Peg. You always thought he was hankering after me——

Good law ! he's dying for Alithea, and Alithea for him—they have had private meetings—and he was making love to her before yesterday, from the tavern window, when you thought it was me—I would have discovered all—but she made me swear to deceive you, and so I have finely—have not I, Bud ?

Moody. Why did you write that foolish letter to him then, and make me more foolish to carry it ?

Peg. To carry on the joke, Bud—to oblige them.

Moody. And will nothing serve her but that great baby ?—he's too young for her to marry. 90

Peg. Why do you marry me then ? 'tis the same thing, Bud.

Moody. No, no, 'tis quite different—How innocent she is !—This changling could not invent this lye ; but if she could, why should she ? She might think I should soon discover it. [*Aside.*]—But hark you, madam, your sister went out in the morning, and I have not seen her within since.

Peg. Alack-a-day, she has been crying all day above, it seems, in a corner.

Moody. Where is she ? let me speak with her.

Peg. O Lord ! then she'll discover all.—[*Aside.*] Pray hold, Bud ; what, d'ye mean to discover me ! she'll know I have told you then. Pray, Bud, let me talk with her first.

Moody. I must speak with her to know whether Belville ever made her any promise, and whether she will be married to Sparkish or no.

Peg. Pray, dear Bud, don't, till I have spoken with her, and told her that I have told you all ; for she'll kill me else.

Moody. Go then, and bid her come to me.

Peg. Yes, yes, Bud. 110

Moody. Let me see——

Peg. I have just got time to know of Lucy, who first set

me to work, what lie I shall tell next ; for I am e'en at my wits end. [*Aside and exit.*]

Moody. Well, I resolve it, Belville shall have her : I'd rather give him my sister, than lend him my wife ; and such an alliance will prevent his pretensions to my wife, sure—I'll make him of kin to her, and then he won't care for her.

Enter PEGGY.

Peg. O Lord, Bud, I told you what anger you wou'd make me with my sister. 120

Moody. Won't she come hither ?

Peg. No, no, she's asham'd to look you in the face ; she'll go directly to Mr. Belville, she says—She must speak with him, before she discovers all to you—or even sees you. She says too, that you shall know the reason by-and-by. Pray let her have her way, Bud—she won't be pacified if you don't—and will never forgive me——For my part, Bud, I believe, but don't tell any body, they have broken a piece of silver between 'em,—or have contracted one another, as we have done, you know, which is the next thing to being married.

Moody. Pooh ! you fool—she asham'd of talking with me about Belville, because I made the match for her with Sparkish ! But Sparkish is a fool, and I have no objection to Belville's family or fortune—tell her so.

Peg. I will, Bud. [*Going.*]

Moody. Stay, stay, Peggy—let her have her own way—she shall go to Belville herself, and I'll follow her—that will be best—let her have her whim. 139

Peg. You're in the right, Bud—for they have certainly had a quarrel, by her crying and hanging her head so—I'll be hang'd if her eyes an't swell'd out of her head, she's in such a piteous taking.

Moody. Belville shan't use her ill, I'll take care of that—if he has made her a promise, he shall keep to it—but she had better go first—I will follow her at a distance, that she may have no interruption: and I will wait in the park before I see them, that they may come to a reconciliation before I come upon 'em.

Peg. Law, Bud, how wise you are! I wish I had half your wisdom: you see every thing at once—Stand a one side then, and I'll tell her you are gone to your room, and when she passes by, you may follow her.

Moody. And so I will—she shan't see me till I break in upon her at Belville's.

Peg. Now for it.

[*Exit Peggy.*]

Moody. My case is something better—for suppose the worst—should Belville use her ill—I had rather fight him for not marrying my sister, than for debauching my wife, for I will make her mine absolutely to-morrow; and of the two I had rather find my sister too forward than my wife: I expected no other from her free education, as she calls it, and her passion for the town. Well, wife and sister are names which makes us expect love and duty, pleasure and comfort: but we find 'em plagues and torments, and are equally, though differently, troublesome to their keeper.—But here she comes.

[*Steps on one side.*]

Enter PEGGY, dressed like ALITHEA; and, as she passes over the stage, seems to sigh, sob, and wipe her eyes.

Peg. Heigho!

[*Exit.*]

Moody. [*Comes forward.*] There the poor devil goes, sighing and sobbing: a woeful example of the fatal consequences of a town education—but I am bound in duty, as well as inclination, to do my utmost to save her—but first I'll secure my own property. [*Opens the door and calls.*]—Peggy!

Peggy!—my dear!—I will return as soon as possible—Do you hear me? Why don't you answer? You may read in the book I bought you till I come back—As the Jew says in the play, Fast bind, fast find. [*Locks the door.*] This is the best, and only security for female affections. [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The Park, before BELVILLE's door. Enter SPARKISH, fuddled.

Spark. If I can but meet with her, or any body that belongs to her, they will find me a match for 'em.—When a man has wit and a great deal of it—Champagne gives it a double edge, and nothing can withstand it—'tis a lighted match to gun-powder—the mine is sprung, and the poor devils are toss'd heels uppermost in an instant. I was right to consult my friends, and they all agree with Moody, that I make a damn'd ridiculous figure, as matters stand at present. I'll consult Belville—this is his house—he's my friend too, and no fool. It shall be so. Damn it, I must not be ridiculous. [*Going to the door, sees Peggy coming.*] Hold! hold! if the Champagne does not hurt my eye-sight, while it sharpens my wit, the enemy is marching up this way—Come on, madam Alithea; now for a smart fire, and then let's see who will be ridiculous.

Enter PEGGY.

Peg. Dear me, I begin to tremble—there is Mr. Sparkish, and I can't get to Mr. Belville's house without passing by him—he sees me—and will discover me—he seems in liquor too!—bless me!

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Spark. Oho! she stands at bay a little—she don't much relish the engagement. The first blow is half the battle.

I'll be a little figurative with her. [*Approaching her.*] I find, madam, you like a solo better than a duet. You need not have been walking alone this evening, if you had been wiser yesterday—What, nothing to say for yourself? Repentance, I suppose, makes you as awkward and as foolish, as the poor country girl your brother has lock'd up in Pall-Mall.

Peg. I'm frighten'd out of my wits.

[*Tries to pass by him.*]

Spark. Not a step farther shall you go, 'till you give me an account of your behaviour, and make me reparation for being ridiculous. What, dumb still—then, if you won't by fair means, I must squeeze you to a confession. [*As he goes to seize her, she slips by him; but he catches hold of her before she reaches Belville's door.*] Not quite so fast, if you please—Come, come, let me see your modest face, and hear your soft tongue—or I shall be tempted to use you ill.

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Hands off, you ruffian—how dare you use a lady, and my sister, in this manner?

[*Moody takes her from Sparkish.*]

Spark. She's my property, sir—transferred to me by you—and tho' I would give her up to any body for a dirty sword-knot, yet I won't be bullied out of my right, tho' it is not worth that——

[*Snaps his fingers.*]

Moody. There's a fellow to be a husband—you are justified in despising him, and flying from him—I'll defend you with my purse and my sword—knock at that door, and let me speak to Belville.—[*Peggy knocks at the door, when the Footman opens it, she runs in.*—Is your master at home, friend?

125

Foot. Yes, sir.

Moody. Tell him then that I have rescued that lady from

this gentleman, and that by her desire, and my consent, she flies to him for protection ; if he can get a parson, let him marry her this minute ; tell him so, and shut the door. [*Exit Footman.*—And now, sir, if your wine has given you courage, you had better shew it upon this occasion, for you are still damn'd ridiculous.

Spark. Did you ever hear the like !—Look ye, Mr. Moody, we are in the Park, and to draw a sword is an offence to the court—so you may vapour as long as you please. A woman of so little taste is not worth fighting for—she's not worth my sword ! but if you'll fight me to-morrow morning for diversion, I am your man.

Moody. Relinquish your title in the lady to Belville peaceably, and you may sleep in a whole skin. 141

Spark. Belville ! he would not have your sister with the fortune of a nabob ; no, no, his mouth waters at your country tid-bit at home—much good may do him.

Moody. And, you think so, puppy—ha, ha, ha !

Spark. Yes, I do, mastiff—ha, ha, ha !

Moody. Then thy folly is complete—ha, ha, ha !

Spark. Thine will be so, when thou hast married thy country innocence—ha, ha, ha ? [*They laugh at each other.*

Enter HARCOURT.

Moody. Who have we here ?

Spark. What, my boy Harcourt !

Moody. What brings you here, sir ?

Harc. I follow'd you to Belville's to present a near relation of yours, and a nearer one of mine, to you. [*Exit.*

Spark. What's the matter now ? 155

Re-enter HARCOURT with ALITHEA.

Harc. Give me leave, gentlemen, without offence to either, to present Mrs. Harcourt to you !

Spark. Alithea! your wife!—Mr. Moody, are you in the clouds too?

Moody. If I am not in a dream—I am the most miserable waking dog, that ever run mad with his misfortunes and astonishment!

Harc. Why so, Jack—can you object to my happiness, when this gentleman was unworthy of it?

[*Moody walks about in a rage.*]

Spark. This is very fine, very fine indeed—where's your story about Belville now, squire Moody? Pry'thee don't chafe and stare, and stride, and beat thy head, like a mad tragedy poet—but out with thy tropes and figures.

Moody. Zounds! I can't bear it.

[*Goes hastily to Belville's door, and knocks hard.*]

Alitb. Dear brother, what's the matter! 170

Moody. The devil's the matter! the devil and woman together. [*Knocks again.*] I'll break the door down if they won't answer. [*Knocks again.*]

Footman appears in the balcony.

Foot. What would your honour please to have?

Moody. Your master, rascal!

Foot. He is obeying your commands, sir, and the moment he has finished, he will do himself the pleasure to wait on you.

Moody. You sneering villain you—if your master does not produce that she devil, who is now with him, and who, with a face of innocence, has cheated and undone me, I'll set fire to his house. [*Exit Foot.*]

Spark. Gad so! now I begin to smoke the business. Well said, simplicity, rural simplicity! Egad! if thou hast trick'd Cerberus here, I shall be so ravish'd, that I will give this

couple a wedding dinner. Pray, Mr. Moody, who's damn'd ridiculous now?

Moody. [*Going to Sparkish.*] Look ye, sir—don't grin, for if you dare to shew your teeth at my misfortunes, I'll dash 'em down your impudent throat, you jackanapes. 190

Spark. [*Quite calm.*] Very fine, faith—but I have no weapons to butt with a mad bull, so you may toss and roar by yourself, if you please.

BELVILLE appears in the balcony.

Belv. What does my good friend want with me?

Moody. Are you a villain, or are you not?

Belv. I have obey'd your commands, sir.

Moody. What have you done with the girl, sir?

Belv. Made her my wife, as you desired.

Spark. Very true, I am your witness—

Moody. She's my wife, and I demand her.

PEGGY appears in the balcony.

Peg. No, but I an't—What's the matter, Bud, are you angry with me?

Moody. How dare you look me in the face, cockatrice?

Peg. How dare you look me in the face, Bud? Have you not given me to another, when you ought to have married me yourself? Have not you pretended to be married to me, when you knew in your conscience you was not?—And have not you been shilly-shally for a long time? So that if I had not married dear Mr. Belville, I should not have married at all—so I should not. 210

[*Belville and Peggy retire from the balcony.*]

Spark. Extremely pleasant, faith; ha, ha, ha!

Moody. I am stupified with shame, rage, and astonishment—my fate has o'ercome me—I can struggle no more

with it. [*Sighs.*] What is left me?—I cannot bear to look, or be look'd upon—I will hurry down to my old house, take a twelvemonth's provision into it—cut down my draw-bridge, run wild about my garden, which shall grow as wild as myself—then will I curse the world, and every individual in it—and when my rage and spirits fail me, I will be found dead among the nettles and thistles; a woeful example of the baseness and treachery of one sex, and of the falsehood, lying, perjury, deceit, impudence, and—damnation of the other. [*Exit.*]

Spark. Very droll, and extravagantly comic, I must confess; ha, ha, ha! [*Enter Belville and Peggy.*] Look ye, Belville, I wish you joy, with all my heart—you have got the prize, and perhaps have caught a tartar—that's no business of mine—If you want evidence for Mr. Moody's giving his consent to your marriage, I shall be ready. I bear no ill-will to that pair, I wish you happy. [*To Alithea and Harcourt.*—tho' I'm sure they'll be miserable—and so your humble servant. [*Exit.*]

Peg. I hope you forgive me, Alithea, for playing your brother this trick; indeed I should have only made him and myself miserable had we married together. 235

Alith. Then 'tis much better as it is—But I am yet in the dark how this matter has been brought about: how your innocence, my dear, has outwitted his worldly wisdom.

Peg. I am sure I'll do any thing to please my Bud, but marry him.

EPILOGUE.

SPOKEN BY PEGGY.

BUT you, good gentry, what say you to this?
You are to judge me—have I done amiss?
I've reasons will convince you all, and strong ones;
Except old folks who hanker after young ones;
Bud was so passionate, and grown so thrifty,
'Twas a sad life;—and then, he was near fifty!
I'm but nineteen—my husband too is young,
So soft, so gentle, such a winning tongue!
Have I, pray ladies, speak, done very wrong?
As for poor Bud, 'twas honest to deceive him!
More virtuous sure, to cheat him, than to grieve him.
Great folks, I know, will call me simple slut,
Marry for love! *they* cry, the country Put!
Marriage with them's a fashion—soon grows cool:
But I'm for loving always, like a fool.
With half my fortune I would rather part,
Than be all finery, with an aching heart;
For these strange awkward notions don't abuse me;
And, as I know no better, pray excuse me.

7 JU 52

[Exeunt omnes.]
